the voluntary retirement scheme, as per Government's deeision; and

(d) the repercussions of the abolition be the Internal Safes Quota oh ihe Coffee industry?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): ta) and (b) After the introduction of free sale quota under which the growers are allowed to sell upto 50 per cent of their produce with out pooling with the Coffce Board, the marketing activities of the Coffee Board has reduced. However, other activities of the Coffee Board remain the same.

(e) There has been no retrenchment of Coffee Board employees. However, a Voluntary Retirement Scheme has been introduced for the employees of the Marketing Division of Coffee Board under which a total amount of Rs. 43.80 crores is likely to be spent. But this amount will vary depending upon the number of employees opting for Voluntary Retirement Scheme.

(d) The internal safe qaota upto 30 par cent of the produce which was introduced during 1992-93 has been replaced in 1994 by a Free Sale Quota Upto '50 per cent of produce; This enable the growers to sell their coffee both in domestic and external markets unlike the internal sale quota tinder Which they could sell their produce only in the domestic market. This has given a thrust for higher exports.

Import of Rubber

867. SHRI M. A. BABY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided ot import rubber;

(b) if so, what is the quantum to be imported and whether the Government are thinking of including rubber under OGL; and

(c) what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P CHIDAMBARAM): (a) to (c) Through a Public Notice on 2-3-1995 Government has allowed Import of 10;000 MTs of Natural Rubber at nil duty upto 31-8-1995. Natural Rubber is, at present, in the negative list of imports. Trade Policy changes is a continual excersise in response to changes in the international and national economic situations.

Export, and Imports

SS8. SHRI SOM PAL: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) what are the figures of exports and imports during the current year so far both in terms of dollars as well as rupees:

(b) what is the item-wise break-up of these and growth of fall in absolute and percentage terms over the same period during the past year; and

(c) what are the main items of exports that have shown encouraging results and what is being done to promote their exports?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) The figures of exports and imports during April-January, 1994-95, the latest period for such data are available in the current year are as follow:

	Exports		Imports
Rs. Crores:	65482.99	..	71247.90
US $ Million:	20871.01	..	22708.42

(b) Latest period for which itemwise break-up of exports and imports are available relate to April-December, 1994, in the current year. These have been published in the Brochure 'Foreign Trade Statistics off India (Principal Commodities and Countries, December, 1994). Copies of this Brochure are available in the Lok Sabha Library.

(c) Exports Of major products/groups wtoieh have shown encouraging feSHlts

during the current year (during April-December, 1994) are coffee, floriculture products, sports goods, marine products, plastics & linoleum, other oress and minerals, cotton yarn fabrics, made ups and project goods etc. Export Promotion is a continuous process. Country- specific and cosamadity—specific measures are taken to boost export. Export preformance is continuously reviewed to improve performance.

MOU between India and USA

869. SHRI SOM PAL: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to State:

(a) whether India has signed an MOU with the United States of America for setting up an macfe-US commercial alliance;

(b) if so, what are the salient features of the MOU and how India is going to benefit from the arrangement; and

(c) when is the alliance going to be operative?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Commercial Alliance provides a framework for increased interaction between private sector enterprises in both countries for expanding business relations. The Alliance will be beaded by a Board made tip of private sector representatives to be nominated by US Commerce Secretary and Indian Commerce Minister. The Board will have two co-chairman, one from each side. The Board will invite private sector representatives to join and organise Business Alliances, to discuss commercial co-operation in specific sectors and implement trade/business development programmes-

(c) The MOU on the Alliance was signed on 16-1-1995. In terms of the MOU, the Alliance, is expected to become operative within 90 days of signing of tie MOU.

Balanced Foreign Trade

870. SHRI K. R. MALKANI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to State:

(a) whether in the April-December, 19*4 period country's exports went up by 16.88 per cent but the imports rose by 23.92 per cent as reported in the Times of India dated 11-2-95; and

(b) when and how Government propose to balance the two policies to give a more or less balanced foreign trade?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM)-: (a) Yes. Sir.

(b) A prior belancing of imports and exports is not feasible under a liberalised trade regime. Increase in imports reflect increase in volume and unit value of a number of essential production inputs required by the Indian econemy. As regards exports, various measures have been undertaken to promote exporis iuciuding grant of tax-exemption on Export-profits, acess to cheaper Expon-crexiks and markets-development support for Export Promotion Coaneils, etc.

Coffee cultivation in Andhra Pradesh

871: SHRI YERRA NARAYANASWAMY: Will the Minister of COMMBRCE be pleased to refer to UnStarred Question 3527 given in the Rajya Sabha on 22*nd* August. 1994 and State:

(a) whether any efforts are being made to extend coffee cultivation in Andhra Pradesh; and

(b) if *so,* the programmes of the Coffee Beard in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMENCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Till date 10,404 ha. have been brought under coffee cultivation in Andhra Pradesh. Under the 8th Plan, efforts are being made to expand coffee cultivation is non- traditional aress in